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S. J. Harrison, Editor.

"Let us go on unto Perfection."

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TODAY'S DEFEAT IS TOMORROW'S FAILURE.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

If the day's brief pain and passing care
Have seemed too much and too hard to bear;
If under its trivial press and smart
Thou hast failed in temper and lost in heart;
If the undiscouraged, journeying sun,
As it sinks to rest with its travail done,
Leaves thee all spent with trouble and sorrow,—
How shalt thou face the harder tomorrow?

If the things familiar daunt thee so,
How shalt thou deal with an unknown wo?
If conquered by every passing dole,
How build the sinews of thy soul?
To stand and shiver on the brink
Of each recurrent task and shrink,
Will never harden thee to abide
The waves of the turbulent Jordan tide.

Never a river but brims and fills
By the aid of numberless slender rills;
Never a strength but has grown and fed
With the force of a weakness conquered;
Never a day but is ruled and shaped
By the power of a yesterday escaped;
And never a human soul that grew
By a single resolve to its stature true.

Winter makes ready for the spring
By months of struggle and suffering;
And the victory won from the mortal strife
Strengthens the fibre and pulse of life.
How if the earth, in its chill despair,
Felt that the fight were too hard to bear?
Where were the bloom and the vintage then?
Where were the harvest for hungering men?

So, if the now seem cruel and hard,
Endure it with thoughts of the afterward;
And be sure that each task that is clearly set
Is to brace thee for other tasks harder yet.
Train the stout muscles of thy will
In the daily grapple with daily ill,
Till, strong to wrestle and firm to abide,
Thou shalt smile at the turbulent Jordan-tide.

—Selected.

Our Exchanges.

In descriptions of men which one often reads there is one which always attracts our attention. It is said that he has a very sharp, piercing eye. No doubt there is a great difference in the eyes of men physically; but after all much of this difference is in the mind. Now we know of no eye that is so sharp as is the eye of hatred and jealousy. Let this passion get into the mind of a Christian and it will give him an eye like a microscope. He turns it toward his brother, and what repulsive sights he sees! Indeed he sees nothing good. And he is so moved by what he sees that he ceases not in season and out of season to talk of his brother's deformities and repulsive features.—*Church Advocate*.

"I do wish we had some system of bringing unemployed preachers and unsupplied churches in contact"—writes a discouraged brother who is a worthy preacher of the Gospel. The remark suggests a problem worth thinking about. It is poor management to have flocks without a shepherd, when there are so many shepherds without flocks. There is a missing link somewhere, or else there are several superfluous links. Some preachers, it is true, are never without employment. Their exceptional abilities always create a demand for their services. But there are others of good average ability who rank quite as high as preachers as many of our congregations do as churches, who are not widely known, and who are modest men; how shall they find work? To such preachers and corresponding churches the problem is confined. First class preachers and first class churches can take care of themselves and will manage to get together. But who shall help the average preacher—to which class most of us belong—to find an average church that will support him while he preaches the Gospel?—*Christian-Evangelist*.

[As these remarks apply as well to the Brethren as the Christian church we suggest the subject for discussion at National and District Conferences. Ed.]

Miscellaneous.

GETTING READY FOR CONFERENCE.

BY J. M. TOMBAUGH.

In the editorial department of the EVANGELIST for July 19th, under the heading of "Getting

Ready for Conference," is found a query of more than ordinary moment; viz: What are the powers and scope of the National Conference? If it is still an open question whether that body may legislate for the churches or not, and if the limitation of its powers has never been defined, then there is need of an immediate investigation of the principles of our church government; for this question goes to the very foundation of our ecclesiastical system.

The diversity of sentiment which the editor has found among our people respecting this matter, would indicate that we either have no established principles of church polity, or that some are yet unacquainted with our system of government. Is the individual church the source of all ecclesiastical authority, or does the aggregation of the individual churches in a conference form a body with powers superior to those held by the congregations themselves? The question is fundamental; and to admit the authority of conference, even in a limited way, is to surrender the principles of congregationalism. If the powers of the congregation are absolute, then the action of conference is advisory. But if conference has authority to legislate, and power to execute its behests, even at the pain of excommunication, then our form of government has no resemblance to congregationalism. But our form of government is congregational, and therefore no power to legislate ever can reside in conference without a subversion of the principles of our government.

What then is conference and what are its powers? Conference is but a voluntary association of the churches which constitute the brotherhood, and the scope of its legitimate action is embraced in the one word—co-operation.

I do not understand that our National Conference ever was designed to be either the legislature or the supreme court of the church. Its existence is necessary as furnishing a field for enterprises which are not of congregational interest alone, but of denominational importance. Our meeting at Warsaw, next month, will give an opportunity for the congregations, east and west, to co-operate with each other in furthering the educational, missionary and publishing interests of the church, but can furnish no occasion for the formation of any rules or creeds or confessions of faith, other than to prescribe the requisites for membership in its own body. If in this matter I seem to speak with more assurance than is becoming, I hasten to defend myself from such a charge by disclaiming any intention to "lay down the law" for conference; I am only interpreting the accepted principles of our congregational system.

Conference represents the wisdom and piety of the church, and its competency to counsel and advise congregations in matters involving the disciplining of members ought to be recognized; but no conference however pious or wise can safely assume authority to enact and to bind upon a church a system of rules. Conference does indeed possess powers, but the power to legislate is not among them. There is one power of conference, which if rightly used, will go very far toward preserving unity and purity of doctrine among us. I refer to the power which conference unquestionably has to prescribe the qualifications for membership in its own body.

Delegates are chosen or not chosen at the free untrammelled will of the congregations, but when they are sent, they are admitted or rejected by the action of the conference itself. If the church has not followed the plan laid down by the conference for choosing delegates, and has sent more than the apportionment fixed by conference entitles her to, or if the election of the delegates is not properly certified to, or if the congregation sending the delegates is doctrinally unsound, then the delegates are refused membership in the conference. For preserving a unity of faith, there could be no more effective plan than this. A church which departs from the faith drops out of conference—drops out of the Brethren procession and remains out till it can be persuaded to return to the faith and practice of the brotherhood again.

The right of conference to prescribe the qualifications of those seeking membership in it must be unquestioned. The pro tem. editor last week criticises the action of the executive committee for insisting upon the observance of the rule made last year concerning the form of credentials to be

used. If our secretary spoke "as one having authority," there was, I am sure, no intention of any undue assumption of authority. Perhaps conference last year was unnecessarily strict in prescribing even the form of credentials which must be presented, but the ex-committee had no authority to set aside the rule. In matters involving the admission of delegates to, or their rejection from membership the power of conference is absolute; beyond this its province is to give advice and to furnish a field for co-operation in furthering denominational enterprises.

Washington C. H., Ohio.

THE COMING CONFERENCE.

BY B. C. MOOMAW.

Yes it is at hand; may it be memorable in the annals of the Brethren church for the unity, love, brotherly-kindness, forbearance, charity, earnestness, zeal and Christliness of its members. May it also be memorable for the work inaugurated for the widespread prosperity of the church. For one the writer comes to this conference resolved upon these sentiments and objects. We are more and more in love with our Bible alone church, and its Bible alone congregational form of administration. Let these divine features receive no impairment at the coming conference.

That abundant fruits may be borne to the glory of Christ, let us observe several wholesome reflections. Brother, when you start to the conference leave self at home. Lock him up in some horse stable so that he can't come along. If you can't find a stable or an outhouse big enough to hold the animal, borrow somebody's barn floor. There are several questions which all of us should ask himself or his neighbor:—"Is this church Jesus Christ's, or is it somebody's? If it is Jesus Christ's we want to stay in it; but if it is somebody's, let us break for the door at once, right over the benches if necessary. If then it is the church of Jesus Christ, what a pitiful spectacle is self-glorification in it. Behold the mighty I; the sublime ego. If he is from the East, the Alleghany mountains are not big enough for a walking-stick. If he is from the West, the prairie is too narrow to contain him. This colossus towers above Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, and like it in another respect is quite ready to roast everybody in seven-fold fires of hottest scorn who will not fall down and worship it. Where is Christ? Well, the last time we saw him he was washing his disciples' feet and teaching them by precept and example that he who would be greatest among them should, in humility and service, be the servant of all." But that was a long time ago; where is Christ today; at the Warsaw conference? Not unless we call to prayer, brethren, and self-crucifixion. Not unless we put away this grinning skeleton of self-exaltation, and for once, as we never did before, exalt Christ above all and before all.

Not infrequently a certain thing occurs at these conferences, big and little, in all denominations, to which we will only devote a mild hint. There are several little oratorical arts, highly prized nevertheless, which are meant to gain for their possessor petty personal triumphs over an adversary, always however, at the expense of brotherly kindness. Brother, leave them at home. If you must practice them on something or somebody, practice them on your dog. He will probably receive your scientific outbursts of scornful wit or classic invective with the sublime indifference which they deserve; or perhaps he will show how much he pities and forgives you.

Let us remember one thing; we are a very little band of brothers and sisters, and can't afford to have any misunderstandings among ourselves. Depend upon it, the big world is hardly aware of our existence at all. If somebody were to tell the big world about our big meeting at Warsaw, Indiana, and the big men we have at the big meeting, the big world would look surprised; and he would reach around for his big microscope and examine the big meeting with big scientific curiosity.

Now there is only one thing that can make our little meeting and our little brotherhood big, and that one thing is a big Christ in it. A Christ so big that he takes up all the room and leaves no space for any thing else, not even for my idol, or